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SUBJECT: BIO DATA REPORT: DEXTER, DARRELL E. -- PREMIER OF NOVA SCOTIA, CANADA

REF: HALIFAX 0039

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¶1. As reported earlier (reftel), Darrell Dexter's New Democratic Party (NDP) toppled the incumbent Tory government of Nova Scotia in a provincial election on June 9, 2009, a victory that saw the party win 31 of the 52 legislative seats. Dexter and his party assumed power 10 days later on June 19.

¶2. NAME: Darrell E. Dexter

¶3. AGE: 52

¶4. PLACE OF BIRTH: Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada

¶5. MARITAL STATUS: Married to Kelly Wilson. They have one son, Harris

¶6. POSITION: Premier of the Province of Nova Scotia, Canada since June 19, 2009.

¶7. PRIVATE CAREER: A practicing lawyer (insurance law) before entering politics; previously served in the Canadian Navy as Command Information Officer for the Navy's west coast fleet and as a sub-lieutenant on two naval vessels.

8: POLITICAL CAREER:

-- First elected to the Nova Scotia Legislature in 1998, re-elected in 1999, 2003, 2006 and 2009.
-- Became leader of the Nova Scotia New Democratic Party in 2001.
-- Before his election as MLA he was active in his local municipal council.
-- Worked for several years in doing behind-the-scenes work with the Nova Scotia NDP party.

¶9. EDUCATION:

-- Bachelor degrees in Education (Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia) and Journalism (University of King's College, Halifax, Nova Scotia)
-- Law degree (Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia)

¶10. MEMBERSHIPS: Member of numerous community and wildlife organizations; member of the Barristers Society of Nova Scotia

COMMENT:

¶11. With his New Democratic Party's majority victory in the 2009 Nova Scotia provincial election, Darrell Dexter became the first-ever NDP Premier east of the province of Ontario. As party faithful and election-watchers unequivocally concluded, the party's historic victory is attributable to one major factor: the strength of party leader, and now premier, Darrell

Dexter. Dexter is highly regarded by friends and political foes alike as a nice, down-to-earth kind of guy who has the interests of his constituents at heart. However, his victory came about primarily through his skill as a natural consensus builder, evidenced early on by his ability to bring together several differing factions within own his party. When he became NDP leader in 2001, Dexter inherited a party that still had a heavy influence of what pundits like to call the "fiery, socialist old guard"--members who were bitterly opposed to people like Dexter who wanted to move the party to a more centrist position on the political spectrum.

¶12. Dexter believed the party's only hope to achieve success at the ballot box would be to soften its socialist edges and present the party as a viable alternative to the province's two traditional parties: the Progressive Conservatives (Tories) and the Liberals. As he began to implement that strategy, some of the old guard left, chastising Dexter for abandoning those who had helped build the party. Others, however, were convinced to join him in this new middle-of-the-road quest, swayed by what they saw as Dexter's sound and pragmatic approach to achieving electoral success. In a few short years the party was noticeably different from that of its earlier days: a party which still held true to the socialist principle of making life better for Nova Scotians, but one which also put a heavy emphasis on fiscal responsibility and working cooperatively with business and industry.

¶13. As Dexter set out to sell his party to the electorate, he was initially viewed with some suspicion, as voters were afraid of embracing a "socialist" premier who they had no doubt would be committed to raising taxes and driving business out of the province. But through Dexter's growing credibility, he slowly turned around the skeptics to the point where they started to take him seriously and began to see him as having the right stuff to be the premier. With that he was able to attract credible candidates to run for the party, along with a large

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cadre of volunteers to help mount a highly successful election campaign. The result was Dexter leading his party to the pinnacle of success on June 9, 2009: a majority win and an undeniable vote of confidence from Nova Scotians.

¶14. Post has had a longstanding cordial relationship with Dexter and his inner circle of advisors who come from both the old and young guards of the party. All, like their predecessors the Tories, attach great importance to issues of interest to the United States: fostering bilateral trade, increasing energy exports to the United States, and working cooperatively with the Canadian federal government on secure border issues. Dexter is also a frequent visitor to the United States, primarily to play golf even if (as he has confided) it means going by himself when none of his golfing partners is available to travel with him. Overall, post anticipates seeing this cordial relationship continue and expand as this well-liked and respected Premier settles down to implementing an agenda overwhelmingly embraced by the voters of Nova Scotia. END COMMENT.
FOSTER